

For Women, Mostly

Child Care

It's a tough choice

Choosing child care is one of the most important decisions that parents make. Unfortunately, your child care options in Utah are quite limited, and the bad news is that the cost of child care is increasing.

It's not cheap

In January 2002, USA Today reported that the average monthly cost of day care, based on a 3-year-old attending the center 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, was \$232 in 1985 compared to \$516 in 2001.

Making it better is up to you

Working parents must become politically active if they want the situation to improve. It will take urging your employer to offer some kind of child care help as one of the companies' benefits: implement child care subsidies, an on-site child care center, etc. It is in the employer's interest to do this, even though the up-front costs may be large, in order to attract and retain quality employees. In the long run, it is a smart business decision and a good investment.



Working parents also need to vote, and urge their lawmakers to help with child care. In addition, churches can be lobbied to use their facilities during the week for child care. All these options are possible, but will depend on the efforts of adults who work and vote, to bring them about.

The good news is that you may qualify for financial help for child care.

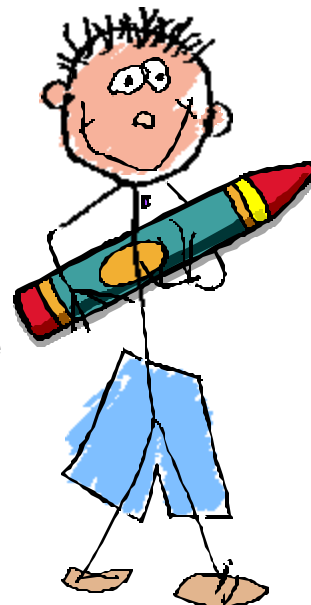
Contact your local Department of Workforce Services Employment Center to see if you qualify. A list of centers and their addresses and phone numbers can be found at: <http://jobs.utah.gov/Regions/EC.asp>, or look in your local phone book in the State Government (blue pages) listings.

What is quality child care?

Quality child care is warm, responsive, consistent and geared to individual children's needs. Quality child care can make a big difference in the future of your child. A positive child care experience can give your child a head start on a strong and healthy mind, body and spirit.

Quality child care includes:

- small groups of children for each adult caregiver/teacher
- C caregivers who show affection, attention and are committed to their job
- C caregivers who continue their training and education in child development
- C bright and colorful environments with natural light, and plenty of space for the children to play - both indoors and outdoors
- C caregivers who encourage family participation and open communication
- C creative and appropriate activities for the individual needs of the children
- programs that are state licensed and monitored



Finding Quality Child Care

The best resource you have when looking for child care is your local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency. Here's where to call in your area:



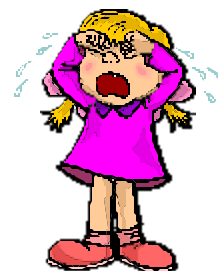
Counties	Contact Information
Box Elder, Cache, Rich	Community Line: 1-435-797-1552 Toll Free: 1-800-670-1552
Weber, Morgan, Davis	Community Line: 1-801-626-7837 Toll Free: 1-888-970-0101
Salt Lake, Tooele	Community Line: 537-1044 Administration: 355-7444 Toll Free: 1-800-839-7444
Utah, Wasatch, Summit	Community Line: 1-801-222-8220 Toll Free: 1-800-952-8220
Daggett, Duchesne, Uintah, Carbon, Emery, Grand, San Juan	Community Line: 1-435-613-5619 Toll Free: 1-888-637-4786
Juab, Piute, Wayne, Millard, Sanpete, Sevier, Iron, Washington, Kane, Garfield & Beaver	St. George: 1-435-628-4843 Cedar City: 1-435-586-8722 Richfield: 1-435-893-8333 Toll Free: 1-800-543-7527

TEN things to consider when choosing child care:

1. What are the ages of your child or children, and do you want your children to be together?
2. What days and hours do you need care?
3. Where are the most convenient locations?
4. How much can you afford to spend on child care?
5. What type of activities will be available for your child?
6. Always chose a caregiver who will allow you to visit often and unannounced.
7. What is the caregiver's discipline policy? Are you comfortable with the discipline policy?
8. Does the program offer transportation for school age children?
9. Does your child have any special needs? Can the program accommodate those needs?
10. Does the provider have up-to-date safety phone numbers available?

Quality child care may be expensive because:

- C Most early childhood programs operate on a limited budget.
- C Parents' fees are the largest source of income for many programs and aren't enough to fully cover the cost of a quality program.
- C Many early childhood programs cannot afford to pay staff decent wages and benefits.
- C In Utah, the child care profession experiences an annual turnover rate between 40% - 60%, due to low wages.
- C High staff turnover has a negative impact on children. Turnover impacts a child's language, social and emotional development.



For more information, contact the Utah Office of Child Care: 140 E 300 South, SLC, UT 84111 526-4340, or toll-free at 1-800-622-7390. Website: <http://occ.dws.state.ut.us/>